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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the influence of authenticity, teaming, and participation on faculty trust. Researchers mailed 437 public middle school teachers a survey which used an authenticity measure, a trust measure (trust in principals, colleagues, and organizations), a teacher involvement in decision making measure, and a question on daily grade level teaming. Teachers reported more trust in their colleagues than in their principals or organizations. Teacher participation in decision making was low. Principal authenticity is composed of three aspects: non manipulation of subordinates, salience of self over role, and accountability. Fully two-thirds of the teachers did not view their principals as authentic. Data analysis indicated that different levels of authenticity influenced aspects of trust in significantly different manners. The study emphasizes the importance of considering the interrelationships between the major variables when establishing a climate of trust within a school. Findings suggest that: teaming represents real reform, and it influences colleague trust, principal trust, and teacher perception of actual involvement in participation; as authenticity increases, trust in organization increases; and trust in the principal is based upon the perceived level of the principal's authenticity. (SM)

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The Myth of the Teacher Resister: The Influence of Authenticity and Participation on Faculty Trust

"If we continue to do what we're doing, we'll continue to get what we've got. Together we can find a better way. We're all going to participate in the decisions that really count. I'm ready to go, what do you think ?" The new principal was eager to begin the task ahead.

> *No response. "Maybe the facade that we're making the decisions. I wonder how many decisions have already been made?"*
>
> *No response. "I'd be very willing to participate but in the past its been participation in name only. We've never sincerely been involved in any decision-making process"*
>
> *No response. "I've been teaching for twenty five years. It has been rare in that time that teachers are actually given a real role in decision-making, Usually a lot of time is spent in committee giving ideas that are either ignored or the intent was never there to accept the input! Changes in curriculum and particularly in the area of scheduling students are often made with little or no input from teachers ."*
>
> *No response. "It always depends on personal whim. If your opinion is not popular, no interactions or contact will be made to serve on committees whose members already have made a decision agreeable to the administrator. If a committee produces ideas not held by the administrator, the committee is usually dissolved and members reassigned to more menial tasks, if any.*
>
> *No response. "Site-based decision making has been a total facade in this building." Totally administrator dominated.*

Faced with silence, the principal ended the meeting, "Well the enthusiasm isn't overwhelming. Maybe we all just need some time to think about it."

Does the above reaction sound familiar? Do the above actual teacher responses (Busman, 1991) represent just another case of

recalcitrant teacher resistors? Think back upon your own career in education. What characterized the times you felt creative and excited about your work, your school, and your school district? During these times, did you feel involved in the instructional decisions of the school? Were you part of committees that were vibrant and alive?

As you think back, do you find that the difference between open, creative times and closed, frustrating times, depended upon the relationships which existed between various members of the school organization? When relationships were characterized by trust, wasn't creativity and excitement the norm? Didn't people ask questions and speak their mind without putting others on the defensive or risking reprisal? On the other hand, when relationships were characterized by distrust didn't people resist and withdraw?

The effect of high trust is powerful. Researchers (Friedlander, 1970; Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974; Zand, 1972) have described trust as one of the basic building blocks on which most interaction is built. This research suggests that trust delimits the openness and accuracy with which problem-solving groups within organizations can function. Problem-solving groups with high trust will exchange relevant ideas and feelings more openly, develop greater clarification of goals and programs, and search more extensively for alternative courses of action. Groups with high trust have greater influence on solutions, are more satisfied with their problem-solving efforts, and have greater motivation to implement decisions. Finally, high trust groups see themselves as closer and more of a team, and have less desire to leave their group to join

another. These high levels of faculty trust need not be left to chance. The development of high levels of trust begins with an understanding of three distinctly different, albeit interrelated, aspects of faculty trust; trust in the organization, trust in the principal, and trust in colleagues (Hoy & Kupersmith, 1984). These three aspects of trust are in turn influenced by three interrelated variables; principal authenticity (Henderson and Hoy, 1982), the existence of structures for teacher participation in decision making, and the perception on the part of teachers that they are actually involved in decision making (Busman, 1991).

The contributors and aspects of faculty trust cited above are defined as follows:

Daily Grade Level Teaming (DGLT). A team of teachers meeting daily who teach different subjects but share the same students.

Faculty trust in colleagues (CT). The faculty can rely on the integrity of their colleagues.

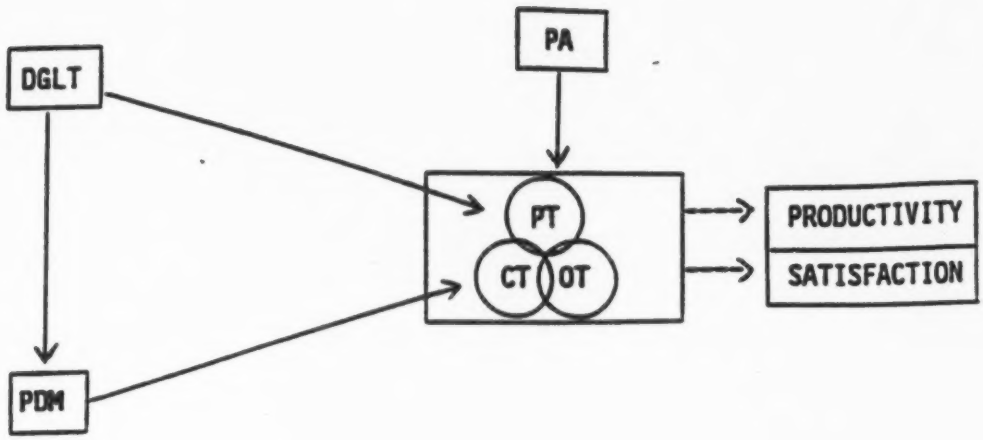
Faculty trust in the organization (OT). The faculty can rely on the school district to act in its best interest and can count on the administration to be fair.

Faculty trust in the principal (PT)- The faculty has confidence that the principal will keep his/her word and will act with the best interest of the teachers in mind.

Participation in decision making (PDM)-A general participative process which excludes participation through delegation.

Principal authenticity (PA). Principal authenticity is composed of three aspects: non manipulation of subordinates, salience of self over role, and accountability.

The diagram below illustrates this researchers findings on how principal authenticity, structures for participatory decision making, and perception of participation in decision making influence the three interrelated aspects of trust:



The center box represents faculty trust as made of up of three distinct aspects; trust in colleagues, trust in the organization, and trust in the principal. Arrows depict the fact that participation influences only trust in colleagues, while authenticity influence all three aspects of trust. Additional arrows indicate that teaming

influences perception of participation as well as directly influences trust in the principal. The segmented arrows are used to suggest that development of aspects of faculty trust influences teacher productivity and satisfaction. However this relationship was not tested.

The following actual teacher comments illustrate the three aspects of trust (Busman, 1991) cited above.

Trust in the organization

> *"The district distorts the truth of class size to the public."*
>
> *"We need our teacher's organization due to board manipulation and distrust of teachers."*

These statements characterize a district with low organizational trust. In districts with low organizational trust, board and superintendent assume that teachers are not to be trusted and that the only way to have effective instruction is to use coercive measures. These coercive measures lead to passive or active resistance on the part of teachers. When teachers either actively or passively resist coercive measures, it seems to justify the need for increased coercion and thus the cycle continues. High organizational trust, on the other hand, is characterized by a lack of coercive practices on the part of central office.

Trust in the principal

> *"As teachers we participate on many committees and put in a lot of work on various areas of school improvement. However, although we participate, we often get the feeling that we are only 'going through the motions' because the decisions have already been made without our input.*

We are told, as a teaching team, that we are empowered to make certain decisions, but in practice we have not been allowed to do so."

The principal likes to talk about 'team effort.' He makes a lot of decisions in the name of 'team effort.' This is pure rhetoric.

These statements characterize a school building with a low level of trust in the principal. Low trust in the principal is characterized by a staff suspicious of change. With trust at a low level, the principal will be unable to unite the faculty behind a strong sense of where they are going and how each individual contribution is part of the larger school picture. On the other hand, a school with high trust in the principal has a faculty which is willing to ask questions, probe for understandings,and take risks.

Trust in colleagues

An interdisciplinary team of teachers recently commented to their business and higher education advisory team; "Teachers in different departments used to be adversaries. Now we trust one another. We're on the same team."

High trust in the principal and high trust in the organization complements high trust in colleagues. A school with high trust in colleagues makes possible the teamwork which can maximize the use of teacher problem solving teams.

The influence of authenticity and participation

Each of the three examples of trust listed above is heavily influenced by principal authenticity. Think about the principal whom you trusted the most? What was that principal like? Would you characterize the principal as willing to accept responsibility for

what went on in the building? Would you characterize the principal as honest? Would you say that the principal saw you as more than just a teacher but rather saw and valued you as a person? If you can would say yes to these questions, you have experienced working with someone who demonstrated authenticity (non manipulative, accountable, and a person first, not bound by a role). Principal authenticity is the single most overriding determinant of a climate of faculty trust in a building. High authenticity leads to high organizational trust, high colleague trust, and most dramatically high principal trust. When authenticity is high it overrides other contributors to a climate of high trust.

When authenticity is at a mid level, certain aspects of faculty trust can still be influenced. Colleague trust, for example, increases when teachers perceive that they are significantly involved in decision making. In addition, implementing daily teaming actually enhances principal trust when authenticity is at a mid level. Even at a mid level of authenticity, the principal shows faith in teachers by entrusting them with the decision making inherent to teaming. In turn, trust in the principal increases and, if teachers perceive that teaming actually gets them more involved in decision making, trust in colleagues increases as well. But, initiating teaming only has a positive effect on trust if authenticity is at least a mid level. If authenticity is low , implementing teaming has a disastrous effect on faculty trust in the principal. What seems to happen is that teaming becomes a sham where decisions of the team are overruled, or the principal "pulls rank", or perhaps refuses to stand behind decisions of the team. In this case,

trust in the principal actually drops below the level it would be without teaming and, if the teachers feel no involvement in decision making, trust in colleagues will not increase.

The Particulars of the Study On Which This Article is Based

The process of selection of a teacher sample began with a list of all public middle school teachers in a targeted intermediate school district. These teachers work in school systems which included communities of diverse sizes, growth rates and socioeconomic status. Next a systematic procedure was employed to identify the teachers targeted to participate in the study. In order to do this a random number was generated as a starting point and a skip interval determined by dividing the total number of middle school teachers in this county (828) by the number of middle school teachers needed (250). The resulting 3.31 was rounded to 3. Beginning at the starting point every third teacher was targeted from the Register of Professional Personnel. 437 teachers were selected through this procedure.

A survey instrument with a letter of explanation and prepaid return envelope was mailed directly to the teachers selected. The survey instrument consisted of a compilation of three existing scales selected following a substantial review of existing measures in comparable research. Reliability, validity, and feasibility were important criteria in the selection of these instruments. The measures used were as follows:

Authenticity Measure

After consultation with Dr. Wayne Hoy, developer of the Leader Authenticity Scale (LAS), this researcher included a 17 item authenticity measure on which respondents indicate the extent of their agreement along a six point Likert scale.

Trust Measure

The Trust Scale (TS),the faculty trust instrument, was developed by Kupersmith (1983) and contains 3 subscales measuring aspects of trust which included, trust in principal, trust in colleagues, and trust in organization. Each scale consisted of 7 Likert-type items with responses ranging along a six point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Teacher Participation in Decision Making

The building level portion of the Critical Decision Inventory developed by **Riley (1984)** was used to measure actual teacher involvement in decision making.

Daily Grade Level Teaming

Because the researcher wanted to determine the effects of daily grade-level teaming on aspects of trust, the following question was included:

Do you meet daily with a grade-level team?
yes no

Prior to testing hypotheses, scatterplots were developed and reviewed to satisfy the assumption of linearity. A frequency table was also developed and examined for breaks regarding participation and authenticity. Both participation and authenticity were broken into approximately three equal groups representing low, average, and high. The choice of thirds was made to avoid unequal group sizes and because division into three groups gives a finer distinction than

either dividing into groups of two or testing using two groups representing the high third and the low third.

The procedure used to test hypotheses which examined the influence of participation, teaming and authenticity on faculty trust consisted of a two way analysis of variance and follow up post hoc analysis using the Scheffé procedure. Significance was determined at the alpha = .05 level.

Summary of descriptive statistics

Regarding trust as a dependent variable, interpretation of the data indicates that teachers of the 21 middle schools reported more trust in their colleagues (mean=4.68) than in their principal (mean=4.19) or in the organization (mean=3.40). On the survey scale of one to six, the mean scores are near or above the mid point. Using the descriptors from the survey as as reference for interpretation, it seems that teachers slightly disagree/slightly agree regarding the presence of trust for organization, and slightly/somewhat agree regarding trust in the principal and trust in colleagues. Although these means appear to be high on a scale of one to six, the study was concerned with the development of the very high levels of trust necessary for effective participation. Although above the mid point, none of the three means cited above approach a score of six at the top of the original survey scale which represents the highest level of trust. Certainly there is room for the level of trust to increase.

The mean score for authenticity was 4.46 on a scale of one to six. The scores for authenticity ranged sufficiently to look at three distinct groups; low, medium, and high. At the low end, approximately 1/3 of the teachers reported an average authenticity

mean of 3.09, another 1/3 reported an average authenticity mean of 4.7, and only 1/3 reported an authenticity mean at the top of the original scale with a mean of 5.6. Or to say it another way, fully 2/3 of the teachers responding did not view their principal as authentic. Analysis of data found that each level of authenticity influenced aspects of trust in a significantly different manner.

Actual Participation in Decision Making

The literature review indicated that teacher involvement in decision making would be low. This was the case as the average participation score was 2.10. Using the original survey scale as a point of reference, the mean score falls below the midpoint on a scale of one to five. Using descriptors from the original scale, the mean level of participation in developing innovative programs is at the recommend decision level and based upon the standard deviation can vary as high as the influence decision level. Mean level of participation for extra duty assignment, faculty meeting agenda, student class placements, and course offerings are near the midpoint of the survey indicating provide information/recommend decision and based upon standard deviation can vary to as high as influence decision. The mean level of participation regarding school schedule, teaching assignment, teacher evaluation criteria and selection of building principal, while at the provide information level, can vary as high as recommending decisions. As was the case with authenticity cited above, participation could be divided into three distinct groups. The lowest 1/3 had a mean of 1.38, the middle had a mean of 2.04, and highest 1/3 could only muster 2.09.

As the literature suggested and this study confirmed , there is little evidence of teacher participation in decision-making in middle schools in this targeted intermediate school district.

Summary of findings regarding overall relationships

A summary of these results indicates positive correlations between the major variables of the study. The results confirm the importance of considering the interrelationships between these major variables when establishing a climate of trust within the school. In addition, the results add support to Kupersmith's 1983 findings and support to the usefulness of the Trust Scales developed by Kupersmith.

Summary of findings on participation in decision-making and its structures

The results indicate that teaming represents real reform in that it influences colleague trust, principal trust, and teacher perception of actual involvement in participation. The presence of structures such as school improvement programs, on the other hand, had no effect on any aspect of trust or on teacher perception of actual involvement in participation.

Summary of findings regarding Colleague Trust

A main effect on trust in colleagues does exist based upon level of authenticity. This is an example of how seemingly fine distinctions in principal authenticity do make a difference. When principal authenticity is high, colleague trust is significantly higher than when authenticity is low. However, there is no difference in trust in colleagues between teachers reporting low authenticity and

average authenticity. Another main effect was found based upon level of participation. Trust in colleagues is significantly higher between teachers who report high levels of participation in decision-making than teachers who report low levels of participation.

Summary of findings regarding Organizational Trust

Gibb (1978) indicates that high trust is the key factor in organizational problem solving while low trust within an organization contributes to a fear/distrust cycle leading to increasing coercive and manipulative behaviors on the part of management and continued uncooperative behavior on the part of workers. Trust in the organization is not dependent upon an interaction between teaming and authenticity and teaming has no effect on level of trust in the organization. Likewise, participation and school improvement programs have no effect on trust in the organization. However, a main effect on trust in the organization does exist based upon level of principal authenticity. As authenticity increases, trust in the organization increases.

Summary of findings regarding Principal Trust

Bennis and Nanus (1985) suggest accumulation of trust as the measure of the legitimacy of leadership and an emotional glue which binds followers and leader behind the vision for the organization.

If accumulation of trust in the leader is indeed the emotional glue that binds followers and leaders behind a vision, how can this bond be increased? A main effect on trust in the principal does exist based upon level of principal authenticity. All three group's

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